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NRO Review Completed as Redacted.

COM-5

DOS, NSC, OSD, JCS reviews
completed

3 April 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Group, 2 April 1964

PRESENT: Mr. Bundy, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Vance, and Mr. McCone.

Colonel Ralph D. Steakley was also present.

1. SAC U-2 Reconnaissance in Southeast Asia.

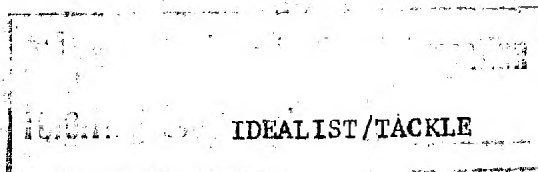
The first paper discussed at the Special Group meeting, "SAC U-2 Reconnaissance in Southeast Asia," a DOD paper dated 31 March 1964, was approved. Colonel Steakley provided an oral briefing in support of the explanation contained in the proposal.

2. Overflying Laos - Air Operations into North Vietnam in Support of OPLAN 34-A.

The second paper, "Overflying Laos - Air Operations into North Vietnam in Support of OPLAN 34-A," caused considerable discussion. Mr. McCone and Mr. Vance were in favor; Mr. Johnson felt strongly that granting of general authority to overfly Laos was unwise. He estimated that the North Vietnamese would become aware of the flights transiting Laos and that the North Vietnamese would exploit this knowledge against an already shaky kingdom. He further felt that the most recent OPLAN 34-A flights of which he was aware were not sufficiently urgent to require this change in policy; they were basically leaflet drops. Counter arguments pointed out the logical and practical aspects of overflying Laos, and the point was made that the efficiency factor of certain flights would be greatly enhanced with permission to overfly Laos. A compromise was reached in that DOD would undertake to specify particular missions for which overflight permission would be of great value. With this further justification, the specific missions would be referred to the Special Group for final decisions.

3. NRO Monthly Reconnaissance Forecast

On the NRO forecast for April 1964, concurrence was obtained by members with two exceptions. The single IDEALIST TACKLE mission scheduled for North Korea was postponed indefinitely pending the outcome of negotiations for the release of U.S. helicopter pilots.



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In regard to missions overflying Cambodia, it was decided to continue flying missions with the 30-mile restriction as spelled out in the memorandum of 3 March 1964 until 9 April by which time an assessment should be available to determine if the photography achievements thus far obtained were commensurate with existing or increased risks.


Peter Jessup

Distribution

Mr. Johnson

Mr. Vance

Mr. McCone

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